

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE SENATE
REFLECTING LEVELS FOR THE CONFERENCE
AGREEMENT**

Period of the current fiscal year, the budget year, and the four fiscal years following the budget year: \$0.

Period of the current fiscal year, the budget year, and the nine fiscal years following the budget year: \$0.

HOUSE RULE XXVII

The adoption of this conference agreement by the two houses would result in the engrossment of a House Joint Resolution changing the statutory limit on the public debt pursuant to House Rule XXVII, clause 3. The rule requires a joint resolution in the following form:

Resolved, by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, that subsection (b) of section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking out the dollar limitation contained in such subsection and inserting in lieu thereof \$9,815,000,000,000.

Legislative jurisdiction over the public debt remains with the Finance Committee in the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means in the House.

KENT CONRAD,
PATTY MURRAY,
RON WYDEN,

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.,
ROSA DELAURO,
CHET EDWARDS,

Managers on the Part of the House.

**REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER
AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1593**

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor on H.R. 1593, the Second Chance Act of 2007.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

**NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 403 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1585.

□ 1301

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROSS in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) each will control 45 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, today the House begins consideration of H.R. 1585, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. This bill is a collective effort in the bipartisan tradition of the House Armed Services Committee, which approved the bill in markup last week by a vote of 58-0.

I want to thank our committee members, particularly our subcommittee chairmen and ranking members, for their outstanding work. And special thanks go to the ranking member, DUNCAN HUNTER, and I appreciate his working so hard in a very bipartisan manner to make this bill come to the floor. He's been a partner in this, and I appreciate it. I am proud that we're always able to work together in our efforts to enhance our Nation's defense.

Mr. Chairman, the polestar of this year's Defense authorization is readiness. Continued reports on the state of readiness for our ground forces, particularly our nondeployed and next-to-deploy forces, are of deep concern. To restore readiness and ensure our forces will be ready if they are called upon for the next fight, this bill fully funds the budget request for the Army and Marine Corps reset of equipment at \$13.6 billion and \$8.4 billion respectively.

They add some \$1 billion in a strategic readiness fund to meet critical readiness requirements identified by a new Defense Readiness Production Board.

It increases training by \$250 million so that our units may get more training time.

It requires a plan and a timeline for replenishing prepositioned stocks.

And it strengthens the National Guard by adding \$1 billion for National Guard and Reserve equipment from their unfunded requirements list, ensuring that the National Guard is able to meet its homeland and civil support missions, and also adding a range of authorities through the National Guard Empowerment Act.

This bill looks out for our troops in harm's way by dedicating substantial resources to improve protection, including \$4.6 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, known as MRAPs, and providing funds for personal body armor and up-armored Humvees.

To reduce the strain on our force and in keeping with the House Armed Services Committee's long advocacy of the need to boost end strength, that is, the number of troops, the bill has authorized an increase in the size of the Army by 36,000 Army troops and Marines by 9,000.

Our servicemembers and their families make countless sacrifices and our pride in them knows no bounds. We express our thanks to them through a 3.5 percent pay raise, by blocking TRICARE and pharmacy program fee increases, by expanding special compensation for combat-related disabled retirees, and establishing a special sur-

vivor indemnity allowance to begin to address the offset to the survivor benefit plan and the dependents indemnity plan.

Provisions also include the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act, which addresses many of the problems identified at Walter Reed Army Medical Center; and, Mr. Chairman, you will recall we passed that as a stand-alone bill just a few weeks ago.

Accountability with respect to our own ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan is also an important component of the measure. The bill requires General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker to report on the implementation of the Joint Campaign Plan for Iraq, as well as on efforts made by the Iraqi Government to achieve political reconciliation.

Secretary Gates is also required to report on the proposed force levels for the 6 months following September, to discuss the missions of our forces, and to inform Congress about contingency planning. The information from this report will help us ask the right questions, the tough questions, and make frank judgments about how we are going to pass the baton on to the Iraqis. I am convinced that the sectarian violence will only be overcome by Iraqi political progress, and thus far, I haven't seen much of that since then.

September's report will be an opportunity for General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker to lay out the straight facts. Time is short with the American people, and the Iraqis must act soon. This report will provide real and substantial information.

Calling attention to the forgotten war in Afghanistan, the bill provides funds for the Afghanistan security forces and requires a long-term sustainment plan so that the Afghans can build the logistics and other capabilities they need for long-term security.

The bill establishes a new Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction to ensure accountability in contracting there and extends the authority of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

The bill also brings more contracting accountability to both Afghanistan and Iraq by forcing the Departments of Defense and State to work together in assigning responsibility for overseeing the thousands of contractors in these places, particularly those who do carry weapons.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, the bill requires that the Secretary of Defense undertake an analysis of the Department's roles and missions. In 1947, a similar effort helped shape the Pentagon through the National Security Act. After 60 years, it is time for a new analysis to help eliminate duplication among the services, identify core competencies, and strengthen the Department of Defense and the military while helping us spend money much more wisely.